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# **ADDICTION DEBATES: CHALLENGING IDEAS, CHALLENGING OURSELVES**

## **EDITORIAL NOTE**

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## **ADDICTION DEBATES: CHALLENGING IDEAS, CHALLENGING OURSELVES**

The process of debating provides individuals with a means of discussing controversial issues in a spirit of openness and self-reflection using reasoned arguments and measured objectivity. In a debate, those who hold divergent views show tolerance, avoid emotionality, and abstain from invectives and rudeness. Debating may not end in agreement, but it should generate a robust analysis and help to improve understanding of the issue being considered. A debate is not the arena to proclaim truths. Rather, as the philosopher Karl Popper noted: "I may be wrong and you may be right and, by an effort, we may get nearer the truth." [1]

The topic of addiction is replete with controversial issues and those immersed in the field commonly speak from the heart, with passion and with conviction. There is a place for emotive entreaties, but it is not the journal, *Addiction*. In *Addiction*, each issue includes research reports and reviews based on the latest scientific evidence, written using neutral language, presented in a standardized academic format, and cautiously noting limitations. However, the journal also reserves space for reasoned opinion-based editorials, letters, commentaries and book reviews. Several years ago, we introduced 'For Debate' articles into the journal's menu. Henceforth this series will be renamed 'Addiction Debates'.

Addiction Debate articles offer authors a forum for raising issues that challenge existing thinking, have been neglected in the literature, or take forward a contemporary concern. They can address matters of policy, treatment, assessment/ diagnosis, theory or methodology; synthesising existing research in order to add new insights that will be of interest to the journal's international audience. Addiction Debate articles should be written in an engaging style, and lend themselves to the expression of views rather than truths. Once accepted for publication, the editorial team commissions three or four short commentaries from authors likely to present differing perspectives on the piece. Once the

commentaries have been accepted, the author(s) of the original article can provide a response to the commentaries and all manuscripts are then published together in one journal issue.

Over the last two years, our Addiction Debate articles have addressed a wide range of contemporary issues within the field, illustrating the diversity of opinion around those issues and the differing rationales that underpin those diverse opinions. These articles can now be accessed in a new virtual issue (XXXX) that covers, inter alia, licit and illicit substances, behavioural addictions, public health interventions, psycho-social interventions, pharmaceutical interventions, methodological concerns, and ethical and legal issues. Addiction Debate articles are consistently popular with our readers, based on our records of downloads and citations, and also with our authors, based on the number of submissions we receive. We therefore now plan to offer them more space within the journal.

In implementing the series name change and committing to providing it with more space, the editors wish to remind potential authors that addiction research does not always replicate “established truths”. We are also aware of a growing literature [2, 3] on the tendency of like-thinking groups to be insufficiently critical of their own ideas, to hold fast to beliefs rooted in false reality, and to ignore challenging evidence to the contrary. As a step towards minimizing epistemic closure in the addiction field, we strongly encourage authors to consider Addiction Debates as a forum in which received wisdoms and sacred views are challenged. If you can make a compelling case that, for example, a widely-praised treatment program is in fact ineffective, that a widely-derided theory in fact explains data very well, or that a well-established principle of addiction research in fact stands on wobbly legs, we very much hope that you will consider Addiction Debates as an outlet for your heretical views.

If you have an idea for an article, we invite you to summarise it in two or three paragraphs and send it to Molly Jarvis: [molly@addictionjournal.org](mailto:molly@addictionjournal.org). Your summary will be reviewed by the editorial team and, if accepted, you will be

commissioned to write upto 3,500 words. All articles will be peer reviewed prior to publication and all commissioned commentaries (which are 500-750 words) will be reviewed by a Senior Editor. Please consult the journal's webpage for further details:

<http://www.addictionjournal.org/pages/authors#generalinformation>

## **References**

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